

Hello Families,

My name is Patrick McDowall and I am a student teacher who will be working with your children over the next few weeks in Mr Ranger's Grade 4/5 classroom. I have already had the pleasure of spending time with them last year but in the coming weeks my participation will increase significantly, to the point where I will be teaching the majority of lessons in the classroom throughout April and into the beginning of May.

So, with this in mind I thought it would be prudent of me to introduce myself and provide some personal background. I am an archaeologist by profession and after graduating from UBC in 2001, I have worked both internationally and within Canada. Most recently I was based in Fort St John, B.C. where I conducted cultural impact assessments on planned pipeline routes. Despite the remoteness and harsh climate of the Subarctic, it was a remarkable experience being able to learn about the Aboriginal peoples who subsisted across its length and breadth several thousand years ago.

While archaeology has been my professional mainstay, I have also delved into several other career paths. For a number of years I practised as a journalist in South Africa where I was employed by the Sunday Times. While being base in Johannesburg, I had the opportunity of reporting on a range of political and social issues, as well as the odd "undercover" trip into Zimbabwe.

Now that I have two children of my own (2 and 4 years-old), my ambitions are slightly more sedate. It was also the arrival of my boys that initiated my interest in elementary education and child development. And so, I am now enrolled in Vancouver Island University's Post-Baccalaureate education program and on the path to becoming a B.C. certified teacher.

Throughout the coming weeks in the classroom, I intend on working with your children to explore a number of themes and subjects, all closely linked to the new BC curriculum. Critical thinking and inquiry are the foundations of my practise and I am excited to provide all learners with the tools and materials to expand their knowledge in a supportive and exciting environment. Several field trips are being planned that will compliment the lessons and provide real world venues for learning experiences.

I look forward to getting to know you all and please don't hesitate in contacting me should you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

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